



West Nile Virus Newsletter

This is an electronic publication designed to keep you informed on issues of interest related to West Nile virus (WNV) in Washington, and provide current information to assist you in developing a response plan to WNV in your jurisdiction.

Threat Level

The initiation of WNV surveillance activities and the beginning of the active mosquito season puts us into Risk Category 1a (see Response Plan). As of May 1, twenty-five birds from fifteen counties have been tested for WNV. All have been negative. American Crows were in the majority along with one raven, one magpie, and one mourning dove.

Fifteen horses from eight counties have been tested for WNV as of May 1. All were negative. There have not been any submissions from suspect human cases.

We are starting to receive mosquito samples for identification and will begin reporting results later this month.

In this issue...

Outdoor worker tips.....	2
Horse vaccine	3
How to subscribe	5

Surveillance News

West Nile virus surveillance staff recently met with the Washington State Department of Transportation (DOT) to assist them in developing a surveillance protocol for their storm water facilities. The plan will include participation in the dead bird surveillance network as well as larval sampling. They have also applied for coverage under the DOH NPDES permit. Further information on the DOT WNV surveillance plan can be obtained from Norm Payton at (360) 705-7848 or e-mail, paytonn@wsdot.wa.gov.

An article in the *National Post*, Canada, dated April 28, 2003, discusses the discovery of the first WNV positive crow in Canada this year, showing that the virus survived the Canadian winter. The crow was from Newmarket, north of Toronto. The positive crow comes a month earlier than the first avian case last year. "It's a bigger risk if the virus can over winter and stay within the province," said Dr. Harvey Artsob, chief of the health department's viral zoonotics and special pathogens division. "It is good evidence that the virus is seeded in hibernating mosquito populations all across Ontario," Dr. Artsob said.

Outdoor Worker Protection Tips

Planning, good work-site maintenance, and simple protective measures can help reduce the risk of WNV infection for workers who are employed in outdoor jobs. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has developed recommendations for protecting workers that are available on the Web, along with further information on risk factors and resources, at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/westnile/>.

Blood Banks in Race Against Mosquitoes

The March 21, 2003, issue of *Science* magazine contains an article on protection of the North American blood supply from WNV. The article discusses test development as well as appropriate use of a blood test for WNV infections. The reference is: *Science*, Volume 299 (5614): 1824.

Horse WNV Case Surveillance

John Grendon, D.V.M. and Kathy Connell, D.V.M., *Washington State Veterinary Medical Association Newsletter*, April 2003.

While there is no evidence of WNV transmission from horses to humans, or that horses serve as a WNV reservoir for mosquito transmission to humans, the initial detection of WNV in some counties in the United States has been through confirmed horse cases. Test results for 50 Washington horses were received in 2002. Two Washington horses were confirmed as WNV positives. Because horses are dead-end hosts, no quarantines were issued for these horses. All have fully recovered.

A WNV positive horse was imported into Snohomish County from North Dakota in late August. The one-year-old gelding never showed any clinical signs of WNV. It was examined and treated for a respiratory infection on September 3. The attending veterinarian tested for WNV because the horse had recently arrived from North Dakota where many horses contracted WNV last year. The horse had not been vaccinated against WNV. Since this horse contracted the virus in another state, it is not being counted as a Washington case.

The first native Washington case was a 14-year-old gelding in Island County. The horse became ill in mid-October, although it had received the equine WNV vaccine September 4 and October 2. He manifested fever, anorexia, reluctance to move, ataxia and hyperesthesia on the face. The horse was found WNV positive on November 13.

The second case was an 18-year-old mare in Whatcom County. The mare received its second WNV vaccination on November 7. She was seen by a veterinarian for ataxia and muscle twitching later in November. This horse was confirmed WNV positive on December 3.

The Departments of Health (DOH) and Agriculture (WSDA), and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) are requesting that veterinarians report equine encephalitis cases of unknown etiology for possible mosquito-borne disease testing.

To report possible WNV in equines, veterinarians should contact:

- The local Animal Health Area Veterinarian,
- The State Veterinarian's Office, 360-902-1878, and/or
- The local USDA Office, 360-753-9430.

In support of local WNV diagnostic efforts, the Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (WADDL) has implemented assays for detection of antibodies in equine serum and CSF, and for molecular detection of viral nucleic acids using PCR and antigens using IHC. Practitioners with questions about the diagnosis of suspected equine WNV can contact WADDL at 509-335-9696. Fatal equine cases of suspect WNV will also be tested for rabies at the DOH Public Health Laboratory.

Horse WNV Vaccine Information WNV Vaccine Information

The most common question from veterinarians is about the equine vaccine. Fort Dodge's vaccine requires two doses, administered IM, 3 to 6 weeks apart. Immunity may not develop for 4 to 6 weeks after the second dose and it can take up to ten weeks for a vaccinated horse to become protected. An annual booster is necessary to continue the protection. Clients should be advised that vaccinated equines might develop an antibody response, which may affect international export of vaccinated animals. Horses vaccinated against other mosquito-borne diseases (EEE, WEE, VEE) are **not** protected against WNV.

Local health jurisdictions should refer specific questions on the vaccine to their local veterinarians or the State Veterinarian's Office at the number listed above.

"From the Nile to the Columbia: A New Virus"

That's the title of a recent forum held in Vancouver, Washington to discuss WNV. The event was sponsored by The Forum at the Library and attended by staff from Clark County Health Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Amazia Veterinary Service. Featured was a slide presentation and panel discussion that is available free by providing a VHS tape to government cable access channel CVTV-23. For more information about a free copy of the program, call 360-696-8233 or go to www.cvtv.org.

Publications Forthcoming in June

Several WNV publications will be finalized and published in June. All will be available in hard copy and on the Web. They include: the 2002 West Nile Virus Surveillance Report, which will provide data summaries and discussion of mosquito, dead bird, horse and human case surveillance; fact sheets on DEET and mosquito control compounds; a Spanish version of the WNV brochure and statement stuffer and, a WNV resource guide that lists key WNV contacts in federal, state and local agencies, tribes, and mosquito control districts.

Community Comments

“The Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your staff for the work that you have done in obtaining a statewide blanket NPDES Permit. Not only does your effort facilitate local government response to West Nile Virus, it enables local government to save money in the process. WSALPHO believes that this represents excellence in government and is an example of a collaborative relationship between state and local government,” Jean Baldwin, Chair, Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials.

Let us hear your comments on this newsletter, your needs, or things you would like to see, by sending them to Maryanne Guichard, (360) 236-3391 or maryanne.guichard@doh.wa.gov.

WNV Web Resources

Washington State Department of Health www.doh.wa.gov/wnv

Center for Disease Control <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/>

Washington State University Cooperative Extension <http://wnv.wsu.edu/>

Cornell University, Center for Environment <http://www.cfe.cornell.edu/erap/WNV>

DOH Contact List for West Nile Virus

General Public Toll-Free Hotline 1-866VIRUS

Publications: Brochures/Response Plan/Fact Sheets

Laura Harper, (360) 236-3380, or laura.harper@doh.wa.gov.

Surveillance: Mosquito

Jo Marie Brauner, (360) 236-3064, or jomarie.brauner@doh.wa.gov.

Surveillance: Dead bird surveillance and general WNV response

Tom Gibbs, (360) 236-3060, or tom.gibbs@doh.wa.gov.

Surveillance: Horses, case reporting, laboratory assistance

Dr. John Grendon, (360) 236-3362, or john.grendon@doh.wa.gov.

NPDES: Training, technical assistance

John Daly, (360) 236-3305, or john.daly@doh.wa.gov.

Ben Hamilton, (360) 236-3364, or ben.hamilton@doh.wa.gov.

Clinical: Human case reporting, diagnosis, laboratory confirmation

Dr. Jo Hofmann, (206) 361-2831, (877) 539-4344, or jo.hofmann@doh.wa.gov.

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